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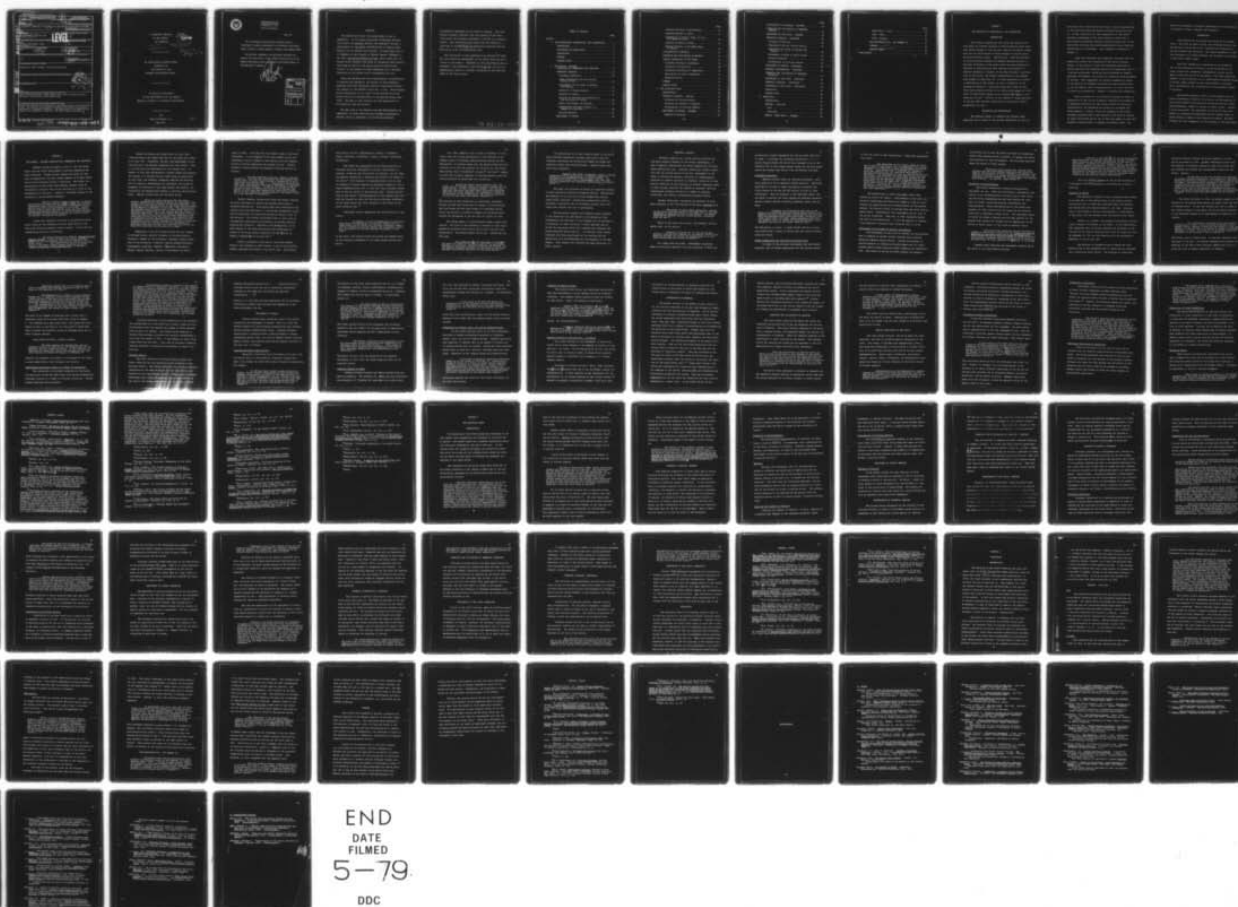
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A historical analysis of the functions of the Stavka, Stalin's wartime military staff. The functions are abstracted to emphasize those which are currently performed in a "peacetime" condition. The conclusions of this comparison and analysis are presented as evidence for the Stavka's current existence.

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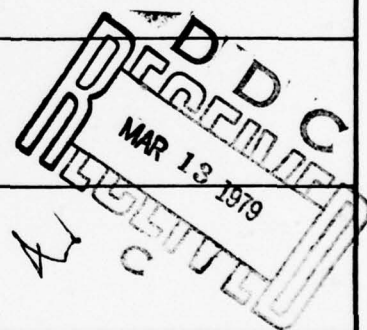
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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence

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by  
Ross O'Donoghue, Jr.

June 1977

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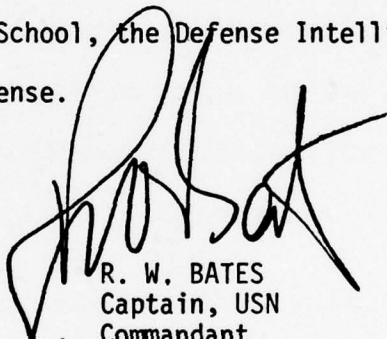
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## ABSTRACT

The problem with which this paper deals is one of appearance. Do the recent promotions of Marshals Brezhnev and Ustinov and Generals Andropov and Schelekov indicate a reactivation of the Stavka, the World War II General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command? If reactivated was it in response to the thoughts of General Ivanov, expressed in his book, The Initial Period of A War, which urged that all actions which formerly took place in the period after hostilities began be moved to the period prior to hostilities? Finally, do the answers to these questions form a reliable indication of the Soviet Union's preparation for war?

Since the evidence for this organizational transformation is nebulous and ambiguous, the answers to the preceeding questions have been approached through a functional-historical analysis of the Stavka's World War II role. This analysis relied extensively on the "open" source literature of the Soviet Union for a determination of the wartime Stavka functions. The goal of this analysis was the abstraction of the functions from the history.

The next step in the analysis was the determination, by comparison, of which functions are currently performed in wartime, which in peacetime, and which are performed

continuously regardless of the state of harmony. This comparison strongly indicates that the majority of the functions which were formerly performed in wartime are currently active. This conclusion also infers that the Stavka or a like body is accomplishing the abstracted functions and has been doing so for an indetermined time.

This conclusion is then supported with opinions of those who have traced the development of the Stavka from the Revolution to the present. Therefore no real significance can be attached to the existence of the Stavka per se, nor can its appearance be used as a reliable indication of the hostility index of the Soviet Union.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROPOSITION, METHODOLOGY, AND ASSUMPTIONS

#### PROPOSITION

The original proposition upon which the research for this paper was founded centered on three questions which dealt with recent changes in the military ranks of the Soviet leadership and the implications of these changes to current Soviet Military-Political policy. Specifically: does the elevation of Party Secretary Brezhnev and Defense Minister Ustinov to the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union and the promotions of Ministry of State Security head Andropov and Minister of Interior Schelekov to General of the Army indicate a reactivation of the Stavka, the General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command of World War II? If these promotions do reflect a reactivation of the Stavka, is this a reflection of the thoughts of General S. Ivanov who urges that those actions which were formerly thought of as taking place after the initiation of hostilities should now be accomplished prior to the beginning of war?<sup>1</sup> Finally, do the answers to these questions in any way form reliable indications of the Soviet Union's preparation for war?

#### DISCUSSION AND METHODOLOGY

The approach chosen to research and analyze these questions was to focus on the wartime (World War II) role of

the Stavka and to derive from this focus a sound understanding of the functions which the Stavka performed during World War II. It was instructive to also concentrate on the overall strategic leadership of the Soviet forces in World War II. This helped to determine discrete Stavka functions and to discern which functions were Stavka-generated and which used the Stavka only as a conveyance. This analysis is contained in Chapter 2.

Since the researcher was ultimately concerned with the present-day efforts and readiness of the Soviet military forces, it was natural to take the abstracted World War II Stavka functions and determine which will be performed only in a wartime environment, which are being performed in today's peacetime environment, and which have continuity from peacetime to wartime. This comparison and analysis suggests an answer to the question of whether the Stavka has been reconstituted or not and whether such a reconstitution is a valid indicator of Soviet war preparation. Chapter 3 contains this comparison.

With the answer to the functional analysis in hand, an examination of the various arguments regarding the probability of peacetime existence for the Stavka as well as historical indications of its existence was called for to answer the first question. Finally, since the analysis of the Stavka strongly indicates that it has existed in one form or another at least since World War II and it does not appear to have been formed or reconstituted in response to General Ivanov, the

author has proposed an alternate explanation for the elevation of Brezhnev, Ustinov, Andropov and Schelekov.

#### ASSUMPTIONS

The research for this paper was driven by two assumptions. The first of these is that the Soviets continually use the setting of World War II as a backdrop for discussion of current problems and decisions. The second assumption is that this discussion of current problems and decisions is mirrored in the Soviet "open" press.

The first assumption is supported by two arguments. One is that historical accuracy is often sacrificed on the altar of political necessity, consequently, history can be made to serve the motive of the moment. The other supportive element is that World War II is a sufficiently discussed series of events, whose outcome is well enough known, to provide solid justification for an exposition of any process, method or decision.

The second assumption relies on the necessity for the Soviet leadership to educate the military and the populace on the various methods, processes and decisions which are undergoing discussion, debate or change at higher levels. Without a truly free press, the leadership of the Soviet Union possesses an invaluable and malleable vehicle through which to signal shifts in dogma to the country as a whole. The main evidence for this assumption is the enormity of the publication



runs devoted to the various discussions of World War II and modern military statements. Such discussions appear to far exceed any normal (normal in the sense of the United States) media production. Certain books are first-printed in 200,000-400,000 copies. The mere volume of such first printings is, in itself, extraordinary.

#### SOURCES

The assumptions previously stated have permitted research to be conducted principally in unclassified sources. Extensive use was made of translations of Pravda, Kommunist, Red Star, Oktiabr and Voennyi-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal as well as translations of books and other articles which have appeared in the Soviet Union. [REDACTED]



## CHAPTER 1 NOTES

<sup>1</sup>S.P. Ivanov, ed. The Initial Period of A War: Based on the Experience of the First Campaigns and Operations of World War II (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974), as translated in Translations on USSR Military Affairs No. 1215, U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 20 January 1976, p.79.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE STAVKA: WARTIME ORGANIZATION, MEMBERSHIP AND FUNCTIONS

Germany invaded the USSR on June 21, 1941 and found Stalin and the Soviet High Command literally unprepared and badly organized. Though various reasons are given for the lack of preparation, the most cogent appears to be that Stalin did not fully perceive Hitler's intentions. The actual disorganization of the Soviet High Command, however, must be attributed to Stalin's fear of the military as a rival to the predominance of the party. Raymond L. Garthoff focuses on the situation in the following statement:

Military leaders played little part in Soviet policy-making during this period [1939-1941]. Any potential increase in their role was thwarted by the General Purge which struck the military heavily in 1937-1938. During the war itself, while the officer corps was permitted to assume unprecedented authority in purely military matters, any tendency to extend this authority to overall matters of national strategy was suppressed.<sup>1</sup>

Stalin had therefore to create an organization which would carry out the necessary military tasks while at the same time retaining complete control himself. He did this by establishing two main institutions:

The State Committee for Defense (Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony, or GKO) in which was vested complete power over all governmental and military organs in the Soviet Union; . . . and concentration of all military authority in the newly created Supreme Headquarters Staff (Stavka Verkhovnogo Glavnokomandovaniia, or Stavka).<sup>2</sup>

Though the Stavka was formed first (23 June 1941), organizationally the higher body was the GKO which was formed on 30 June 1941. Succintly, the GKO, was established to provide political and economic leadership for the country. Some of its functions are descriptive of its overall role. It appears to have been structured to concern itself with placing the economy on a wartime footing, mobilizing the population for the front and industry, preparing reserves for the Army and for industry, establishing the production and volume of armaments for delivery to the armed forces, and finally, for instructing the Supreme High Command in military and political tasks. Marshal Kulikov sums GKO functions up as:

During the Great Patriotic War the State Defense Committee was created by decree of the Central Committee, the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks), the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR. The committee was the supreme organ of state power in whose hands were concentrated the leadership of the country and the conduct of military operations. The State Defense Committee, personifying the unity of political and military leadership, put into practice the policy developed by the Communist Party. It resolved the most important tasks associated with the leadership of the national economy and the use of human and material resources, determined the main directions of developing the Armed Forces, and allocated the forces and means for resolving military-political tasks.<sup>3</sup>

Membership in the GKO changed during the war; however, it included Stalin, Molotov (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Voroshilov (Member of the Politburo), Malenkov (Deputy Secretary of the Politburo), Bulganin (Deputy Defense Minister), Voznesenskiy (Chairman, Gosplan), K<sup>a</sup>oganovich (Politburo), Mikoyan (Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers) and Beria



(Head of NKVD). This then was the highest organ of political leadership. It was composed of the most powerful party and government civilian leaders in the country with the responsibility of totally mobilizing the country for war. Admiral Kuznetsov lucidly posited the problem of wartime control by stating:

One very important question, however, remained unresolved. This was the question of how the highest authorities were to direct the troops [at a conference in April 1940 after the Finnish war] . . . the Finnish campaign had shown that organization of military leadership at the center left much to be desired. In case of war (large or small) one had to know in advance who would be the Supreme Commander in Chief and what apparatus he would work through: was it to be a specially created organ or the General Staff, as it had operated in peacetime.<sup>4</sup>

Stalin, however, waited until after the actual invasion by Hitler had begun to resolve the problem which Admiral Kuznetsov pointed out. Even though some such organization had existed since the Revolution, it had become increasingly incapable of performing its functions because of Stalin's fear of the military. The Finnish involvement made it clear that an intermediary organization was necessary to provide detailed planning and direction. Therefore, the Headquarters of the High Command of the USSR Armed Forces was established by decree of the Party Central Committee and SNK [Soviet of People's Commissars] on 23 June 1941.<sup>5</sup>

Various estimates of the size of the Stavka appear, however, the consensus is that between 12 and 24 top military leaders comprised the Stavka at any given time. Among these



were Stalin, Molotov, Shaposhnikov, Budenny, Timoshenko, Zhukov, Kuznetsov, Voroshilov, Voronov, Antonov, Vasilevsky, and Khrulev.

The Stavka was responsible for deciding questions of strategic planning, deployment of forces, distribution of material, formation and utilization of reserves, and for sending special emissaries to supervise and control the Armies in the field.<sup>6</sup> This breakout of responsibilities will be used as examples of Stavka supervision throughout Chapters 2 and 3. These responsibilities are, in sum, the total strategic management of the war effort on the military side. General Kulikov says of the Stavka, "The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command was created to carry out the direct strategic leadership of the Armed Forces and their struggle at the fronts of the Great Patriotic War."<sup>7</sup>

Sokolovsky further emphasizes the centralization of the Stavka.

In summary, it must be emphasized in particular that strict centralization of strategic command of the Armed Forces by the Stavka and flexible leadership responsive to changing situations ensured the successful conduct of a victorious war and the complete attainment of its aims.<sup>8</sup>

In any event, the Soviets accord the Stavka the highest place in the strategic leadership of the Armed Forces during World War II.

Yet, there appears to be at least a haziness, if not a cloud, over the various perceptions of the workings of the highest organs of strategic decision-making during the war. Fortunately, all sources agree that the General Staff was subordinate to and did the planning and staffing for the Stavka. Some authors such as Shtemenko<sup>9</sup>, Kulikov<sup>10</sup>, Mal'tsev<sup>11</sup>, appear to favor the collegial approach to decision-making as the following quotation by Sokolovsky will illustrate:

During the entire Great Patriotic War, the Stavka was the highest agency of strategic command for the Armed Forces. It was a collegial agency. All the most important decisions were made after the Stavka discussed them with the front commands, the commanders in chief of the branches of the Armed Forces, the service commanders, as well as with other individuals concerned.<sup>12</sup>

The opinions of such authorities as Sokolovsky, Shtemenko, Kulikov and Mal'tsev would seem to justify a firm conclusion that the Stavka and the other organs of leadership ground slowly and gravely to carefully thought out decisions which ensured the management of the war from all points of view.

Two things appear to contraindicate these notable authorities. The first is the necessity in wartime to make rapid sequential decisions which do not often allow time for calm deliberation. The second element was Stalin. Sokolovsky himself says:

The combination [in the personage of Stalin] of the posts of leader of the Party, head of the government, Chairman of the Stavka, People's Commissar of Defense, and the Supreme Commander provided the most unified political, economic and military direction to the Armed Forces.<sup>13</sup>

The termination of so many reins of power in one man's hands provides substantial evidence that Stalin used the strategic leadership and deliberative bodies as staffs and executors rather than decision-makers. Seweryn Bialer supports this assumption.

Whatever the number of members, however, Supreme Headquarters never operated as a collective body; its decisions were ultimately those of Stalin himself. An authoritative Soviet source acknowledges that 'The high military leadership was completely concentrated in Stalin's hands.'<sup>14</sup>

The power and influence of Stalin are important because of their pervasive influence throughout the war. Additionally the downplay of his role by military authorities writing today surely indicates a historically retroactive drive to establish a reputation for the collegial process which will stand alone without the cult of personality.

The functional breakout that Seweryn Bialer ascribes to the Stavka will be used herein as the analytical tool. Consequently the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of these functions as major headings used to divide the operations which this research has indicated the Stavka performed during the war. In this way, those unique functions the Stavka performed will be outlined and the ground work will be established for the analysis in the next chapter. That chapter will evaluate the same functions in a modern setting.



## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is a prime military function and one which properly belongs to the Stavka; furthermore, it has 12 specific subfunctions for which examples can be found. These subfunctions are: strategic prediction; proper preparation for the initial period of the war; development of new forms of warfare and weapons; direction of reconnaissance; decisions to defend; decisions to withdraw; selection of weak points; selection of the direction of thrusts, assigning tasks to major groups; securing the element of surprise; devising simultaneous strategic attacks in a number of adjacent directions; and finally, coordinating partisan efforts.

Marshal Sokolovsky, discussing the question of strategic planning in the 1963 edition of his book, Strategy says:

The theory of deep combat operations, created in the 1930's was cast aside on the basis that it had been developed by supposed enemies of the people. The Soviet Armed Forces entered the war without having a strategic plan for war.<sup>15</sup>

While on the other hand General (now Marshal) Kulikov states that, in his opinion:

Strategic Planning carried out by the Headquarters, Supreme High Command and the General Staff in the years of the past war suited the demands made on it and was distinguished by profound foresight.<sup>16</sup>

In a sense both are right. Sokolovsky's statement seems to accurately describe a pre-war situation in which the



Soviets were largely unprepared for the war which they were to fight. A strategy was ultimately devised but a lengthy period elapsed before the Soviet Union managed to go on the offensive and an even longer period (three and one half years) before the Germans were driven from the Russian land mass.

### Strategic Prediction

Whatever Kulikov meant by "profound foresight", strategic prediction is an important Stavka function. Sokolovsky describes it so that it means the ability to predict the future course of the war and the ability to plan to fight accordingly. This is certainly a very desirable skill, and one which is bedrock for other aspects of strategic planning. Marshal Grechko implies a slightly different result when he says:

Foresight and forecasting were also at the basis of our military-technical policy whose correct, purposeful execution ensured that during the war the Army and Navy were equipped with first-class tanks, artillery, aircraft, small arms, and other combat equipment which was not inferior and in a number of cases was superior to the equipment and arms of the German Fascist Army.<sup>17</sup>

The implication is clear: a prime Stavka function is strategic prediction in order to ensure that the correct alternatives are chosen.

### Proper Preparation for the Initial Period of War

In light of the previous discussions the next Stavka function, that of proper preparation for the initial period

of the war takes on some significance. Sokolovsky emphasizes this point.

The experience of the initial phase of World War II showed very clearly that the aggressor had created beforehand, in peacetime, strong well-prepared armies for invasion. Such armies made it possible for Germany to start war suddenly with the immediate development of decisive active operations not only in the air but also on the ground. The attacked countries were forced from the very first days of the war to resist the attacks of the main armies of the aggressor under extremely unfavorable conditions, and at the same time, to mobilize and deploy their armed forces as well as to switch the national economy to a war footing. However, Soviet military strategy failed to draw the appropriate practical conclusions from this experience.<sup>18</sup>

The preparations to which Sokolovsky refers were ignored by Stalin and others. Significantly in the first two editions, Sokolovsky took Stalin and others to task for overlooking the opportunities and vulnerabilities of this period. However, the abrasive attack is omitted from the third edition quoted above. Nevertheless, this experience was not lost on the Soviet leadership. They more or less vigorously bemoan the loss of this opportunity. It will be apparent in Chapter 3 how important a function they currently feel it to be.

#### Development of New Forms of Warfare and Weapons

The development of new forms of warfare and the development of weapons is another Stavka function which received extensive emphasis during the war. Shifts from defense to counteroffensive to offense and breakthrough were all newly-learned efforts which required careful planning and implementation. The course of the war provided various new weapons -

both ground and air and the Stavka provided the leadership, albeit often echoing Stalin's opinion, to request the design and production of such new weapons. The following quotation shows the extent of their concern:

During this very trying time, Supreme Headquarters and the State Defense Committee were quite frequently distracted by trifles, devoted an excessively long time to an evaluation of sniper and automatic rifles, and endlessly discussed whether the infantry should be equipped with infantry - or calvary - type rifles.<sup>19</sup>

#### Direction of Reconnaissance

The Stavka consistently directed reconnaissance throughout the war. There was invariably a requirement from Stalin to his representatives to locate this or that force, and the Stavka representatives who were leading the front were, of course, providing priority requirements for reconnaissance. These representatives to the fronts were normally in close contact with the enemy and not normally faced with a completely unknown force. The insatiable desire to locate the enemy's dispositions had many payoffs for the Supreme High Command but perhaps none so spectacular as the Battle of Kursk, where, in the words of General Ivanov:

One of the most important factors conducive to success in the Battle of Kursk was the timely and complete discovery of the enemy plans and troop concentrations. This allowed the Soviet Supreme Command to adopt in advance strategically expedient decisions, suiting the situation and skillfully to carry them out.<sup>20</sup> [Emphasis in original]

Marshal Konev describes the management guidance which was given to the intelligence services.



Starting in April [1943], all of the intelligence services worked to discover the plans of the Nazi Command. Their attention was chiefly concentrated in the zone of the Central, Voronezh and South Western fronts. On instructions from Marshal Vasilevskiy, Chief of the General Staff, the Intelligence Department of the General Staff, and the Central Headquarters of the Partisan movement were assigned the mission of ascertaining the presence and disposition of reserves in the enemy's tactical rear and the areas where troops from the West were being concentrated.<sup>21</sup>

This is a notable example of the use and direction of intelligence and reconnaissance as the basis for strategic planning.

#### Decision to Defend

The decision to defend is also a function which should be an exercise of the highest skill in the Stavka process. During World War II there were instances where the decision was wisely made and instances where it was rash. Opinions vary on the wisdom of Stalin's determination to hold Moscow at any price, but his decision left the Stavka little choice.

Moscow, as a symbol, was probably sufficiently significant to warrant its defense to the death. It has additionally been suggested that the German advances had succeeded in taking more of the Soviet territory than could be traded for time by September of 1941 and that Moscow had to be successfully defended or the war was lost.

The decision to counter-attack at Moscow was also Stalin's and it was successful but it could only be sustained for a relatively short period. The shortage of troops and



materials severely limited the Soviet capability in the spring and summer of 1942. Marshal Vasilevskiy states that the adoption of strategic defense at this time rather than both defense and offense was recommended to Stalin by the Stavka. However,

In the face of the very acutely felt shortage of trained reserves and materiel, the conduct of individual offensive operations resulted in an intolerable expenditure of forces. The events which unfolded in the summer of 1942 already showed that had there been only the revision to temporary strategic defense along the entire Soviet - German front and had the conduct of offensive operations (e.g., the Khar'kov operation) been rejected, the country and its armed forces would have been spared serious defeats, ...<sup>22</sup>

The battle of Kursk, in 1943, is another example of the decision by the Supreme High Command to defend first and then to counter-attack. It was well thought out, and it seems to be a better example of the proper use of the Stavka function of the strategic defense as an opportunity to transition to offense.

At a conference which was held at the General Headquarters on April 12 and attended by Marshal Stalin, Marshal Zhukov, Marshal Vasilevskiy and General of the Army Antonov, it was decided in principle to assume a deliberate defensive at Kursk. This was one of the most outstanding decisions in the history of the art of war.<sup>23</sup>

The Soviets tend to regard Kursk as the most important turning point of the war. Its outcome certainly has promoted the efficacy of the idea of the strategic defense and this is a point not lost on today's generation of leaders.

### Decision to Withdraw and Selection of the Direction of Thrust

Examples of decisions to withdraw are somewhat harder to find considering the possible accusations of cowardice and treason which were quite likely to follow. General Zhukov however indicates in his memoirs that withdrawals were countenanced to prevent breakthroughs.<sup>24</sup> If the decision to withdraw had not been quite so unpopular more encirclements and annihilations might have been avoided in the early part of the war.

Sokolovsky speaks of the necessity to select the weak points in the enemy's defense and lays this aspect of strategic planning squarely on the Stavka. He ties it in with the allied function of selecting the direction of the thrust.

The Soviet Supreme High Command in the past war selected that direction for the main thrust in which the enemy was most vulnerable and which would assure the decisive destruction of the largest and most dangerous enemy grouping and assure the accomplishment of major military and political results leading to a sharp change in the strategic situation throughout the entire front in favor of the Red Army.<sup>25</sup>

The significance of these two factors lies in their location in the decision-making chain. They are decided at the highest level, not at the front, and they take into account not only the tactical and strategic situation but the economic and political as well. Sokolovsky further illustrates the principle by the decision to counter-attack at Moscow in early 1942 and subsequent decisions to liberate the Eastern Ukraine in 1944.<sup>26</sup> General Shtemenko, in discussing the final drive for

Berlin, argues that the Soviet offensive formation created the mistaken impression in the German minds that the main attack would come through Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This misperception created the weakpoint which was subsequently chosen by the Stavka for the main thrust.<sup>27</sup>

The Stavka busied itself with the assignment of tasks to major groups. Regardless of echelon, a visit or communication from the Stavka could always be expected. A specific assignment or general exhortation was likely. As the skill of the Stavka improved during the war, instructions of more and more specificity outlined the initial phases of offensive operations. In this way it appears that the Stavka was able to construct groupings of fronts and make them part of coherent strategic plans. The Stavka's growing ability to function in this area is an indication of their increased efficiency as the war progressed.

#### Secure the Element of Surprise

For many years, until after the death of Stalin, it was not advantageous to talk in general terms about the use of surprise in wartime. Certain feelings about it were too painful to bring up because of Stalin's lapse which allowed the initial German assault. Lessons, however, were learned and it became important for the Stavka to secure the element of surprise. The Headquarters Supreme High Command had a great deal of trouble digesting the wartime lesson but their evaluation may best be shown by two quotes of General Ivanov:



Experience showed that it is extremely difficult to recapture the strategic initiative lost to the enemy at the beginning of a war.<sup>28</sup>

The experience of a number of first campaigns showed that a 'lightning' victory can be achieved in the initial period of war only over a militarily and economically weak enemy with limited territory and without all-political solidarity and the will to battle to the end. . . . The consequences of the first massive strikes were extremely serious even for the large nations, however, and were catastrophic for certain of them, France, for example.<sup>29</sup>

The above is an example of surprise from a macro view, a cognizance which will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 3. For surprise on a less grand scale, the Stavka had every desire to gain it and keep it, for only with it could they hope to launch the extensive series of offenses which led to their ultimate success.

Kursk again provides a graphic example:

The Army command and headquarters took all possible measures to keep secret the preparations for the operation and to mislead the enemy. It was important to convince the enemy that nothing was changing on our side, that anything we did was fortifying our defenses.<sup>30</sup>

Surprise was therefore an element to be grasped by the Stavka at every opportunity, both strategic and tactical.

#### Simultaneous Strategic Attack in a Number of Directions

The culmination of strategic planning for the Stavka was that point in the war where they could devise simultaneous strategic attacks in a number of adjacent directions. Marshal Kulikov describes this procedure:



The strategic offensive attained a high degree of sophistication in subsequent campaigns. It was achieved by waging a logically sequenced series of strategic offensive operations along the front and in the rear. This provided an opportunity for us to organize powerful strike groupings and hit enemy units separately, each time selecting the most advantageous direction for the next attack. At the final stage of the war, strategic operations were carried out simultaneously along the entire Soviet-German front. This deprived the enemy of any possibility of maneuvering his forces and equipment at the front and organizing large groupings of troops to counter our attacks. The strategic operations during this period were distinguished by ~~varied~~ and effective forms of maneuvers aimed at surrounding large enemy groupings, crushing and splitting the enemy's front and liquidating the isolated groups one by one.<sup>31</sup>

Strategic planning in this subfunction of the offensive was accomplished on a vast scale and in such a rapid and confusing manner that the Germans were unable to bring reserves from one point to another. The Stavka strove mightily to achieve this strategic situation and actually accomplished it only after the summer of 1943. It was however an ideal which suited them from the start. This form of strategic offensive thinking indicates an especially high degree of control and planning.

#### Partisan Efforts

The final function of strategic planning which the Stavka undertook was the coordination and direction of the partisan efforts. The Stavka understood the enormous potential represented by the mass of people who had been overrun and enslaved by the rapid German advance. Though a period elapsed before they could reach and organize the partisan effort, by the time of the Stavka preparations for the battle of Kursk,

Marshal Vasilevskiy could write, ". . . intensification of partisan activity with the aim of organizing large-scale sabotage in the enemy rear and obtaining important intelligence. . ."32

Suffice it to say that partisan operations and the strategic coordination thereof were operable and responsive to the Stavka throughout the war.

#### DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES

Bialer's second major functional area of the Stavka process was the deployment of forces. This is a clear and natural progression from strategic planning and also contains several distinct subfunctional areas: creating strategic organizations; creating fronts; creating defense in depth; integrating ground, navy, air and air defense forces; creating special forces; and finally directing and massing aviation on the main axes of attack.

#### Creating Strategic Organizations

Naturally, during the first few weeks of the war, with the Soviet Union on the defensive, extensive changes were made in an attempt to create the overall strategic organization. For example:

On 29 June 1941, within a week of Hitler's attack, Stavka (General Headquarters of the Supreme High Command) redesignated the Chief of the Administration of The Red Air Force as Commander of the Air Forces of the Red Army and a Deputy Commissar of Defense. At the same time, the civil air fleet was made into an operational arm of the Red Air Forces, directly subordinate to the High Command.<sup>33</sup>

The history of the first three months of the war is a comedy of groupings, sectors, fronts, subdivisions, recombinations, changes of command, firing of commanders and so on. Reserves were rushed from one hot spot to another. As Sokolovsky points out:

. . . the first weeks of the war demonstrated that because of the rapidly changing strategic situation and the frequent disruption of communications between the General Headquarters and the operating fronts and armies, the Stavka could not cope with the problems of direct command of the troops. Consequently the high command of the northwest, west, and southwest areas were created by a resolution of the State Defense Committee on July 10, 1941.<sup>34</sup>

The Stavka gained control of the situation and ultimately decided to use the "Front" as its basic unit of organization. Sokolovsky again supplies us with a description of this structure.

The fronts, organized at the beginning of the war from border military districts were operational and strategic units of the Armed Forces . . . The staffs of the fronts were agencies which accomplished the development, planning, preparation, and provisioning of the operations.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the war, with the exception of the Japanese involvement at war's end, the Stavka used the front as its strategic entity.

#### Creating Defense in Depth

Defense-in-depth occupied the Soviet Supreme High Command by necessity. The strategy (to which the only alternative was surrender) of "bleeding the enemy white by trading space



for time" was exercised at Moscow, Stalingrad and Kursk. The first two battles were forced upon the Soviets, Kursk was deliberately planned and executed as a defense. Of Stalingrad Zhukov said,

It was clear to me that the battle for Stalingrad was of the greatest military and political significance. If Stalingrad fell, the enemy command would be able to cut off the south of the country from the center.<sup>36</sup>

Faced with this inevitability, Zhukov and the Stavka formed a defense of such depth that the Germans simply could not break through.

#### Integration of Ground, Navy, Air and Air Defense Forces

As the Stavka achieved skill in its force deployment functions it became increasingly necessary to integrate ground, navy, air and air defense forces. Combined operations were essential if defense were to be capable of holding and if counter-attacks were to succeed. Having the total decision-making power at hand was a distinct advantage when this need arose. Therefore as the command became more sophisticated:

A new type of strategic operations definitely shaped up in the course of World War II - operations of groups of fronts as a result of whose conduct important strategic missions were accomplished. Several fronts, Long Range Aviation, and often navy and national air defense forces and weapons participated in such operations. Front group operations were prepared and conducted under the direct leadership of the Supreme High Command.<sup>37</sup>

Continuing emphasis was placed on this effort throughout the war with good success.



### Creation of Special Forces

The Stavka during the war was confronted periodically with the requirement to create special forces of different varieties. Two examples should suffice to show the breadth of this effort. First, the defense at Stalingrad:

However, when the situation [Stalingrad] remained critical and there were signs of panic among the Soviet forces, the Stavka, on August 14, [1942] ordered the two Fronts [Stalingrad and Southeastern] unified again and placed under the command of General Eremenko and the political supervision of Khrushchev.<sup>38</sup>

Second, the counteroffensive

A special operation had to be organized [by the Headquarters, SHC] to liquidate the surrounded grouping, and for an extended time this distracted significant forces from actions on the external front.<sup>39</sup>

### Massing Aviation on the Main Axes of Attack

As a final function of the deployment of forces the Stavka can be found engaged in the massing of aviation on the main axes of attack. At the beginning of the war, the Soviet Air Force lost an enormous number of aircraft and suffered several changes in leadership until General A. A. Novikov assumed command.

According to Colonel William F. Scott, USAF (retired), "His [Novikov's] primary task was to act as STAVKA's senior air representative. In this capacity he was responsible for the coordination of air armies assigned to the various fronts."<sup>40</sup> Novikov's successful coordination reached a high point when

the Soviet Air Forces assisted in clearing a path for the ground forces at the battle of Kursk this mastery by the Stavka was the culmination of years of confusion and effort.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIAL

The Stavka, as part of its effort to gain control of all the critical functions of the war, was necessarily deeply concerned with the distribution of material. Due to chronic shortages of virtually everything which their forces needed, the Stavka approached this difficulty from two directions. First, they made their requirements known to the State Defense Committee which was in charge of manufacturing and transporting the materials to the Armed Forces. Second, they took the materials which they could obtain and distributed them on the basis of strategic or tactical need, whatever was more momentarily pressing. Two subfunctions appear to be supportive of this function: they are the activities associated with the Stavka Office of Chief of the Rear of the Red Army and the ensurance of logistical support. They are discussed as one. "The post of Chief of the Rear Areas of the Red Army was established directly under the Stavka to coordinate the operation of the Armed Forces rear."<sup>41</sup> Among other things, this office was responsible for organizing the transportation of all supplies to the fronts, creating bases and warehouses and distributing foodstuffs and forage. This was an enormous responsibility and one which the Stavka did not feel could be delegated to a lower level. At one point during the War

General Khrulev, who was having difficulty reaching the troops with supplies, applied to Stalin to authorize the use of horse-drawn wagons. Stalin acquiesced and General Khrulev relates that reindeer-drawn supply trains in the north and camel trains in the south were quite popular.<sup>42</sup> General Khrulev was ultimately effective in his logistical support of the Armed Forces but in the initial period of the war frightful losses and misdirection of equipment often occurred.

#### FORMATION AND UTILIZATION OF RESERVES

The fourth major function with which the Stavka was concerned during World War II was the formation and utilization of reserves. This vital function consists of two parts: first, creating strong, well-prepared armies; and second, the concentration of reserves. There are numerous examples of the performance of these functions by the Stavka. The responsibility for creating new formations was assigned to the main Administration of Newly Activated Units (Upraform).

With the organization of Upraform which produced trained formations for the disposal of the Stavka for their use on the front during the Great Patriotic War, the General Staff was relieved of the extremely complex functions of activating new units and instructing reserves, leadership of internal military districts, etc., so that all its attention could be concentrated on directing the front forces.<sup>43</sup>

The Soviet Union possessed a profusion of manpower and the seemingly endless reserves of population served them well. The Stavka employed all available manpower to defend Moscow



and was skillful in gaining local superiority in numbers. A similar effort was required to defend Stalingrad.

A great number of Headquarters' trained reserves were enlisted in the defense of Stalingrad. From 23 July through 1 October 1942 alone, 55 rifle divisions, 9 rifle brigades, 7 tank corps, and 30 tank brigades arrived at the Stalingrad axis. In addition, the main streams of the reinforcement drafts were sent in the summer and fall of 1942 to this decisive axis of the struggle.<sup>44</sup>

The Stavka used its reserve well, particularly during and after the battle of Kursk. Reserves were strategically held until the proper time and then relied on to provide local superiority of mass.

#### SPECIAL EMISSARIES TO THE FIELD

The final Stavka function, but by no means the least important, was that of providing special emissaries to the field. The Stavka, or perhaps more appropriately Stalin, felt much more comfortable in dealing with a critical situation if he could deal directly with one of his own trusted representatives. Among others, Voroshilov, Vasilevskiy, Voronov, Govorov, Zhukov, Timoshenko, and Shaposhnikov represented the Stavka at various echelons of the Soviet forces. As Kulikov suggests,

Representatives of the Headquarters, Supreme Command were usually sent where the principal missions were being carried out in accordance with the plan of the Supreme Command, and wherever operations by groups of fronts were planned.<sup>45</sup>

Several specific subfunctions can be isolated in this framework: providing strategic cooperation between the Stavka and fronts; providing follow-up to Stavka directions; continuous monitoring of operations, restoration of front cooperation in event of disruption; bypassing fronts when necessary; and spearheading the main forces of the front or fronts. These subfunctions describe the activity of the Stavka in dealing with lower echelons.

#### Providing Strategic Cooperation

To provide strategic cooperation between the Stavka and the front, the Supreme Commander (Stalin) himself normally set out the instructions for the commander. He would either send a representative or call the commander to him. This was sufficient to provide rapport between Stalin and his commanders but further insurance was found necessary. Thus Kulikov says:

In the course of the Great Patriotic War such a form of strategic leadership as the activity of representatives of the Headquarters, Supreme High Command at the front, was used successfully. Objectively, it was brought about by the need to bring leadership closer to the troops, to raise efficiency of command while ensuring coordination of actions at groups of fronts resolving the same strategic mission.<sup>46</sup>

This continuous shuttling back and forth must have taken its toll. Zhukov, for example, not only participated in the planning of all major strategic operations of the war but for the most part actually led at Leningrad, Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk-Orel, and the Battle of Berlin. Marshal Vasilevskiy spent 22 of the 34 months in which he served as Chief of the General Staff at the front.

### Follow-up to Directives

The normal situation would require only the supervision of other on-scene commanders as Roman Kolkowicz says:

"Usually, the Front command received instructions from the Stavka and operated within the plan of battle thus transmitted from above."<sup>47</sup> However, the directive system was replete with redundancies and was responsive to changing situations.

Sokolovsky describes how the Stavka followed up its directions:

The Stavka's decisions were transmitted to the commanders of the front troops, fleets and flotillas as directives from Supreme High Command. The directives usually indicated the aim of the operation, the forces to be employed in its execution, the area for concentrating the main forces (the main blow), when the plan of operations was to be presented to the Stavka, and the time the operation was to be ready or a procedure for transmitting information that it had started. When carrying out the directives of the Headquarters, the front obtained specific instructions from the Stavka, the commanders of branches of the Armed Forces and service chiefs.<sup>48</sup>

### Continuous Monitoring of Operations

Stalin is notorious for his lack of trust and he insisted that his minutest instructions be continuously monitored. The Stavka performed this function to the hilt and found it necessary not only because of the constant inquisitiveness from above but also because the criticality of the situation was one which could not be allowed to go astray. Michael Garder has focused on these and other reasons for close Stavka supervision.



The command still remained very centralized, with liaison officers representing the Stavka on numerous fronts. Because of this, the initiative of front commanders was rather limited. Moreover, they were not given general reserves except for specific missions. Still less at army level . . . This centralization, partly an inherent feature of the Soviet system, was also justified by the doubtful value of the superior cadres. Divisional, brigade and corps commanders were, as a whole, inferior to their German counterparts.<sup>49</sup>

#### Restoration of Front Cooperation

The Stavka was necessarily in the best position for restoration of front cooperation in the event of disruption. It alone had the knowledge, experience, communications and reserves to be able to discover and fill any breeches in the line of front maneuver. Its goal was to equalize the rate of advance, or stop the enemy offense and it devoted considerable attention and close supervision to this problem. As before, Stalin took an active interest in even the smallest appearance of disruption, the Stavka was therefore assiduous in its efforts to restore cohesiveness.

#### Bypassing Fronts

Under certain circumstances, the Stavka felt called upon to bypass the fronts and go directly to a lower echelon. The situations which called for this were often tactical in nature with a representative of the Stavka present. According to Sokolovsky it was not a regular procedure:

This system of assigning missions to the fronts, together with the rigid centralization of strategic command by the Stavka, made it possible for the commanders of the front troops to exercise considerable initiative.

The same practice was also used when the Stavka issued orders directly to armies, bypassing the fronts. This was not a regular practice, and was used only in exceptional cases when the situation demanded rapid action and did not permit delay. Moreover, the Stavka immediately informed the commander of the front troops of the orders it had issued.<sup>50</sup>

The overall validity of the above statement is however, somewhat tenuous since the Stavka membership was more often at the front than not. In any event, the Stavka members did spearhead the main forces of the front or fronts from time to time though this particular subject appears controversial. Sokolovsky on the same page as the statement above, says:

The representatives of the Stavka aided the front commands in carrying out the plans of the Supreme High Command and in making decisions concerning the role and location of one or another front in the conduct of an operation. These representatives also solved problems of operational strategic coordination on the spot. However, there were also basic shortcomings in the activity of the Stavka's representatives, mainly where the representatives of the Stavka substituted for the front troop commanders, constricted the initiative of the latter, and reinforced and supplied one front at the expense of other fronts.<sup>51</sup>

The important point is that it did occur, repeatedly, and became a subject of some pride for those who took part.

To summarize this final function it is precise to say that the Stavka, as the expression of Stalin's will, took a very close interest in all aspects of frontal and even army operations. Their attention and concern reflect the energy and insatiability of Stalin. It may be that their ultimate success was attributable to their thorough supervision and leadership.

## SUMMARY

The foregoing discussion has dealt with the organization, membership and functions of the Stavka. The primary emphasis has been to illustrate the functional role of the Stavka. Based upon this analysis, the Stavka can be characterized as totally involved with every aspect of the running of the war. It is, in a way, a reflection of the mind, energy, direction and personality of Stalin himself. The Stavka process is also the functioning of a very thoroughgoing group of professional staff officers, who, when faced with the terrifying prospect of stopping Hitler, were inspired and imaginative in their grasp of the myriad details required to accomplish their task.

The main reason for this analysis however, is to abstract from the day-to-day running of World War II the functional aspects which the Stavka naturally assumed. Having done this, the World War II Stavka can be abandoned and focus directed at the functions alone.



## CHAPTER 2 NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Raymond L. Garthoff, Soviet Military Policy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1966), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Roman Kolkowicz, The Soviet Military and the Communist Party (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 64-65.

<sup>3</sup>Victor Kulikov, "The Army's Brain," Pravda, November 13, 1974, as translated in Strategic Review, III, No. 2 (Spring, 1975), 114.

<sup>4</sup>N.G. Kuznetsov, "Pered voynoi, "Oktyabr", No. 9, 1965, pp. 188-189, as translated in Seweryn Bialer, ed., Stalin and His Generals: Soviet Military Memoirs of World War II (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 136.

<sup>5</sup>Mal'tsev, Ye., "CPSU -- Inspirer, Organizer of Victory of Soviets in Great Patriotic War," Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal, No. 4 (1975), as translated by Translations on USSR Military Affairs No. 1172, U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 5 August 1975, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Bialer, op. cit., p. 337.

<sup>7</sup>Kulikov, loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup>V.D. Sokolovskii, ed., Soviet Military Strategy, trans. and analyzed by H. Dinerstein, L. Gouré, and T. Wolfe, (Santa Monica, California: United States Air Force Project RAND, 1963), p. 494. [1st Edition]

<sup>9</sup>"For the operative solution of military questions joint meetings of members of the Politbureau, and the State Defense Committee, and of the Politbureau and GHQ were convened, and the most important of them were discussed jointly by the Politbureau the State Defense Committee and GHQ." S. Shtemenko, "Staff Activity," Soviet Military Review, January, 1975, p. 52.

<sup>10</sup>"Strategic planning conducted by the Headquarters, Supreme High Command, the General Staff, and other organs was based on these military-political tasks, which were promulgated in the given period of time by policy. Political leadership (the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) and the GKO) determined the goals of the struggle, allocated forces and means necessary for attainment of the established goal, while mobilizing the efforts of the entire country to ensure success for the Armed Forces." Victor Kulikov, "Strategic Leadership of the Armed Forces," as translated by Translations on USSR Military Affairs No. 1160, U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 8 July 1975, p. 48.

11 "The combat staff of the party was its Central Committee elected at the 19th Congress. All the fundamental questions of national leadership and waging of the war were settled by the VKP (b) (All Russian CP) Central Committee, its bodies, the Politburo, Orgburo, and Secretariat. During the years of the war, over 200 sessions of these leading party bodies were held. The decisions which were worked out by the party Central Committee were then carried out through the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the SNK, as well as the GKO and the HQ, SHC. Joint meetings of the members of the Politburo and GKO, the Politburo and Headquarters were held for the purposes of effectively settling military questions, and the most important of these questions were discussed jointly by the Politburo, GKO, and Headquarters. This made it possible to examine the arising questions thoroughly and completely, to elaborate the most advisable decisions and effectively carry them out." Mal'tsev, op. cit., p. 9.

12 Sokolovskii, op. cit., p. 489.

13 Ibid., p. 492.

14 Bialer, op. cit., p. 114.

15 Sokolovskii, op. cit., p. 81.

16 Victor Kulikov, "Strategic Leadership of the Armed Forces," op. cit., p. 50.

17 A.A. Grechko, "The Science and Art of Victory," Pravda, February 14, 1975, pp. 2-4, as translated by Soviet Press Selected Translations, April 1975, p. 29.

18 V.D. Sokolovsky, Military Strategy, trans. Harriet Fast Scott (3rd Edition; Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio: U.S. Air Force Systems Command, Foreign Technology Division, 1968), p. 136.

19 N.N. Voronov, "At Supreme Headquarters", Bialer, op. cit., p. 210.

20 Semyon Ivanov, "The Battle of Kursk and Its Effect on the Development of Strategy and Operational Skill", The Battle of Kursk, ed. Ivan Parotkin (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 150.

21 Ivan Konev, "The Great Battle of Kursk and Its Historic Significance", Parotkin, op. cit., p. 17.

22 A.M. Vasilevskii, "Between Moscow and Leningrad", Bialer, op. cit., p. 405.

- <sup>23</sup>Konev, op. cit., p. 18.
- <sup>24</sup>G.K. Zhukov, "Battle", Bialer, op. cit., pp. 286-287.
- <sup>25</sup>Sokolovsky, 3rd ed. op. cit., p. 144.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 145.
- <sup>27</sup>S.M. Shtemenko, "In the General Staff", Bialer, op. cit., p. 475.
- <sup>28</sup>S.P. Ivanov, ed., The Initial Period of a War: Based on the Experience of the First Campaigns and Operations of World War II, translated by Translations on USSR Military Affairs No. 1215, U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 20 January 1976, p. 77.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 78.
- <sup>30</sup>Ivan Bagramyan, "The 11th Guards Army's Flanking Attack", Parotkin, op. cit., p. 145.
- <sup>31</sup>Victor Kulikov, "Soviet Military Science Today", Communist, May 1976, translated by Soviet Press Selected Translations, September, 1976, p. 21.
- <sup>32</sup>Alexander Vasilevsky, "Strategic Planning of the Battle of Kursk", Parotkin, op. cit., p. 73.
- <sup>33</sup>William F. Scott, (Col USAF, Ret.), "Soviet Aerospace Forces: Continuity and Contrast", Air Force Magazine, March, 1976, p. 40.
- <sup>34</sup>Sokolovskii, 1st ed., op. cit., p. 459.
- <sup>35</sup>Sokolovsky, 3rd ed., op. cit., p. 372.
- <sup>36</sup>G.K. Zhukov, "Razgram Nemetskikh Voysk v. Rayone Dona, Volgi i Stalingrada", cited by Otto Preston Chaney, Jr., Zhukov, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 216.
- <sup>37</sup>V.D. Sokolovsky, ed., Military Strategy: A Comparison of the 1962 and 1963 Editions (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, Joint Publications Research Service, 1963), p. 82.
- <sup>38</sup>Kolkowicz, op. cit., p. 227.
- <sup>39</sup>A.A. Grechko, ed., "History of World War II of 1939-1945; The Main Turning Point in the War", as translated by Translations on USSR Military Affairs (GUO 61/76), U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 10 December 1976, p. 98.



<sup>40</sup>Scott, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>41</sup>Sokolovskii, 1st ed., op. cit., p. 491.

<sup>42</sup>A.V. Khrulev, "Quartermaster at Work", Bialer, op. cit., p. 375.

<sup>43</sup>V.D. Sokolovsky, 3rd ed., op. cit., p. 372.

<sup>44</sup>A.A. Grechko, ed.-in-chief, "History of the Second World War 1939-1945, Volume V", as translated by Translations on USSR Military Affairs (GUO 37/76) U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 30 July 1976, p. 23.

<sup>45</sup>Kulikov, "Strategic Leadership of the Armed Forces", op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>47</sup>Kolkowicz, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>48</sup>Sokolovskii, 1st ed., op. cit., p. 412.

<sup>49</sup>Michael Garder, A History of the Soviet Army (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), pp. 114-115.

<sup>50</sup>Sokolovskii, 1st ed., op. cit., p. 493.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE FUNCTIONS TODAY

#### INTRODUCTION

The functions of the Stavka which were discussed in the last chapter were necessarily all functions of the World War II period. The Stavka itself was a wartime organization which was officially disbanded at the end of that war. It was created after the invasion had begun, an invasion for which the Soviet Union was not well prepared even though the previous ten years had been spent in building the equipment and manpower of the armed forces.

The leadership of the Soviet Union after World War II was highly receptive to the lessons of World War II and was particularly impressed by the devastation caused by the surprise German invasion.

The most important common feature lay in the fact that unlike previous wars, the different parties launched combat operations on a tremendous scale from the very first minutes of the war and conducted them for determined goals, using all the forces which the warring nations had managed to develop by the beginning of the war. The party taking the initiative in unleashing the war entered it with fully mobilized armed forces deployed in advantageous offensive groupings. As a rule, the party subjected to aggression lagged behind in its strategic deployment and yielding to the enemy's strategic initiative, began the war with defensive operations by covering forces. Mobilization and deployment of the main forces were completed during the course of initial operations.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the post-war discussion of this problem was delayed until after Stalin's death yet, it lurked in most Soviet military minds.

Another factor which is important is that once the war was over, the organs of strategic leadership disbanded, Stalin did not disarm. ~~Whatever provocation he may have felt from the United States or fear that the Chinese would spill over~~ his border, it is suspected that he was still rigidly afraid of another surprise.

A third factor which is pertinent to this chapter is the revolution in military affairs which took place with the advent of nuclear weapons.

The use of the nuclear rocket weapon essentially changes the beginning period of the war. The second World War has shown already that the time has passed when the beginning period amounted to weeks and even months, in the course of which mobilization and concentration of the troops of the states entering into battle took place. Foreign specialists calculate that now the armed forces must be kept in that structure and that condition in peacetime which will allow the achievement of strategic goals to be expected in the very first days of the war.<sup>2</sup>

All of these factors militate for a different perception by the Soviets of the current state of affairs from that which prevailed prior to World War II. For this reason what follows is an examination of the functions which were discussed in Chapter 2 in order to ascertain whether or not they are now performed in wartime only, in peacetime, or continuously. This examination should lead to several conclusions which will be fully explored in the next chapter.



Those functions which are exclusively wartime actions shrink as a body when examined in the light of the previously expressed desires for readiness for the initial period of a future war. If it is assumed as the Soviets appear to, that the next war will be a very quick, surprise mass attack, then moving as many functions as possible to the pre-war period is essential. Sokolovsky speaks of the Soviet Union's economy as:

The ability of the country's economy to mass produce military equipment, especially missiles, and to establish superiority over the enemy in modern weapons are the material prerequisites of victory. The ability of the economy to assure the maximum power to the Armed Forces for dealing an annihilating blow to the aggressor in the initial period of the war will be decisive for the outcome of a future war.<sup>3</sup> (Emphasis in original)

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING: WARTIME

With absolute preparation in mind, what type of purely military functions are relegated to the after-initiation-of-hostilities period? Only those which cannot be physically performed in peacetime suggest themselves. In the functional area of strategic planning the direction of reconnaissance (tactical), the decision to defend, the decision to withdraw, the selection of weak points, the selection of the direction of thrusts, the decision to devise simultaneous attacks on main axes of attack, securing the element of tactical surprise, and the coordination of partisan efforts are functions which must wait for the war to be exercised. Many of these are not clear-cut as will be shown in the subsequent

discussion. (Even those which are to be performed in wartime could be considered ongoing on the political and economic battlefield under the Soviet concept of the correlation of forces.)

#### Direction of Reconnaissance

The direction of reconnaissance, if tactical, is essentially a wartime function. In peacetime, only a determination of the static situation is possible. Strategic reconnaissance, however, and especially, in light of the envisioned rapid development of the initial period of the war must be considered a peacetime function.

#### Maneuver

The next five functions, that is, the decisions to defend or withdraw, the selections of weak points and the direction of thrusts as well as the decision to devise simultaneous attacks on the main axes of attack are all wartime functions. The first four are tactically dependent, and the fifth presumably derives from an ongoing situation or a decision by the Soviets to launch a surprise attack. The surprise attack intention is not admitted by the Soviets thus the remaining option is that of counter-attack, a definite wartime event.

#### Securing the Element of Surprise

Securing the element of tactical, or local, surprise is a function that depends on the immediate situation, again

presumably, a wartime situation. The same strictures that were mentioned above apply: a surprise attack planned before the war is not an option, while a counter-attack takes place only during hostilities.

#### Coordination of Partisan Efforts

The coordination of partisan efforts in the classical sense takes place only after hostilities have begun and territory has been overrun. However, if this function were construed to mean using indigenous party members or sympathizers as quislings then the planning for this function might well become a peacetime effort.

#### DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES: WARTIME

##### Massing of Aviation

In the modern context the only function of force deployment which takes place in wartime is that of directing or massing aviation on the main axes of attack. Almost all other aspects of force deployment can, and probably do, take place in the period prior to hostilities. The massing and direction of aviation will take place in a counter-attack and will be dependent upon enemy force deployment.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIAL: WARTIME

The current Soviet perception of the outbreak of hostilities dictates an effort to distribute enough material in peacetime to last through the initial period of fighting.



The wartime performance of this function relies on the counter-attack and the subsequent resupply of the forward elements with a unilinear supply line. This particular aspect of the distribution of material is necessarily a wartime function.

#### FORMATION AND UTILIZATION OF RESERVES: WARTIME

The utilization of reserves becomes a wartime function in today's context. It is not one which usually takes place in peacetime. If the Soviet active forces do, in fact, number <sup>4.4</sup> million, and are in a state of constant readiness to fight the anticipated short and furious initial-period war, then the call up, utilization and concentration of the reserve forces will take place only after hostilities break out. This concept again tends to preclude the resort to an initial Soviet attack.

#### EMISSARIES TO THE FIELD: WARTIME

Finally, in considering those functions which occur only during wartime, the representative function of sending emissaries to the field must be examined. Given the nature of any future war, only restoration of front cooperation after disruption, and the function of spearheading the main forces of the front can be considered as solely wartime occurrences. Planning for these could go on in a general way in peacetime but they rely mainly on hostilities to be viable.

The functional perceptions discussed above, are those purely military functions which can only be performed in wartime. They are clearly essential functions which must be accomplished for any successful prosecution of a conflict, but they are not the only ones necessary for success, as Chapter 2 pointed out. The functions which follow are ones which are perceived as being accomplished in peacetime.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING: PEACETIME

Strategic planning, as a functional area, changes its period of performance between World War II and the present. While in World War II it was clear from the start that little or no strategic planning was done in the period preceeding the war, since that time a great deal of effort has been expended to carry out certain of the subfunctions before any hostilities begin. These include: strategic prediction, accomplishment of proper preparation for the initial period of a war, development of new forms of warfare and development of new weapons, assignment of tasks to major groups, securing the element of strategic surprise, and finally, coordinating partisan efforts.

##### Strategic Prediction

Strategic prediction is a function the performance of which is clearly better approached in peacetime in order to provide for the tailoring of the armed forces to match the strategic objectives of the Soviet Union. The Soviet perception of class conflicts, wars of national liberation, and

conflict between the USSR and the U.S. are all well served by their armed forces. Their predictions of the needs of future conflicts are reliably reflected in their peacetime armed forces.

#### Preparation for the Initial Period

Some of the changes in perception which surround the initial period of the war have already been discussed. These changes are profound and have in turn essentially changed Soviet strategy. Soviet perceptions of the preparations for this period have moved through three distinct phases.

The new means of conducting armed conflict has radically changed our views on the content and significance of the beginning period of war.

Before the First World War, the time from the declaration of war until the beginning of operations by the main forces was understood to be the beginning period. It was considered that in this period, troops, deployed in the border area, must conduct combat actions for the purpose of not permitting invasion by the enemy into one's own territory and assuring the mobilization and deployment of the main forces for subsequent military operations with decisive goals. And this was confirmed by the experience of the First World War.

The Second World War, as is known, began without a declaration, by surprise, with an attack of fully mobilized and previously deployed main forces of fascist German troops. Thus the role and content of the beginning period of war was changed and its influence on the course of the war grew. However, as a whole this period because of the limited possibilities of means of destruction, did not have a decisive influence on the outcome of the war.

With the beginning of mass introduction of the nuclear rocket weapon into the armed forces, great attention was given in the theory and practice of military art to working out methods of conducting combat actions in the beginning period of war. It was considered that in this period armed forces, using the nuclear weapon, could



achieve the immediate strategic goals of war and that the results of the beginning period would have a decisive influence on the subsequent course and outcome of war.<sup>4</sup>

Sokolovsky probably focuses on this function as well as anyone when he speaks of ". . . the effectiveness of the efforts made at its very beginning."

The initial period of the future war will be of critical importance. In this period both sides will endeavor to achieve maximum results, applying the greatest possible efforts. Consequently, the most important factor determining the duration of the war will not be the time during which the war is conducted, but the effectiveness of the efforts made at its very beginning. Thus the duration and intensity of the war must be measured by two standards, as it were: the duration of the war as a whole and the effectiveness of employment of forces and resources within a definite interval of time.

The more effectively a state uses the weapons and forces accumulated before the war, the greater the results it can achieve at the very beginning of the war and the more rapidly victory can be achieved.<sup>5</sup>

That the continuing emphasis on proper preparation for the initial period of war has become a completely peacetime effort is an almost forced conclusion.

#### Developing New Forms of Warfare and Weapons

The revolution in military affairs does not allow the development of new forms of warfare and weapons to occur after war has already begun, according to current Soviet doctrine. The reason is probably best expressed in the following statement:

The striving to apply military - technical might and the basic efforts of the armed forces in a crushing nuclear rocket strike on the aggressor determines the

need to create all the conditions for its preparations in peacetime. Before the beginning of the war, all the necessary forces and means must be prepared assuring the waging of war both in the beginning period and in the subsequent period. In the conditions of nuclear war the significance of the economy of the country and the military-technical superiority over the enemy, achieved prior to entering into war, has grown. It is highly important to have at one's disposal the military-technical means which assume the use of technical surprise, that is, new means of armed struggle which the enemy does not have.<sup>6</sup>

Current estimates of increased Soviet capabilities and equipment point out the extent to which the Soviets have pursued this function.

#### Assignment of Tasks to Major Groups

The assignment of tasks to major groups appears to have shifted into the peacetime framework. If the initial period of fighting is to be so short and intense, then those fighting it must know their roles from a strategic viewpoint. Reacting to an attack is a wartime function but counter-striking on a massive scale must be planned well before the war breaks out and it is for this reason that this function is assigned a peacetime role. The targets of the Strategic Rocket Forces are in all probability, pre-planned as are those of Long Range Aviation, and the Navy. Clearly then, the strategic assignment of tasks enjoys a peacetime role.

#### Securing Surprise

Since the beginning of World War II when the Soviet Union was the victim of strategic surprise a shift has occurred in their thinking. In 1955 Marshal of Tank Forces, P. Rotmistrov stated:

The growth of the role of surprise, in combination with the changed character of contemporary war, indicates that if we are forced to take up arms we should be able to gain the strategic initiative by using the surprise element to the full.<sup>7</sup>

Later writings have indicated a full appreciation of the nature of surprise and while denying any intention of preventive war, have been ambiguous on the subject of preemptive war. The lessons of World War II are contained in the following quotation.

Initial operations once again confirmed tendencies on the part of powers taking the initiative in unleashing a war to carry out unexpected strikes of maximum force against the enemy from the very beginning. Governments and military control elements of the aggressive nations used all of the means and methods of influencing the enemy, including political, diplomatic and military moves to conceal the real plan and time for launching aggression.<sup>8</sup>

Strategic planning to secure surprise does then take place during peacetime. Given the destructive nature of the initial period it seems clear that it is desirable that surprise be completely secured prior to the initiation of hostilities.

#### Coordination of Partisan Efforts

Coordination of partisan efforts as a peacetime effort is dependent on point of view. If the military is involved in detailed planning for the use of indigenous party personnel in the event of hostilities, then this function is a peacetime function, as discussed earlier. It appears important enough as a function to warrant peacetime attention from a wide segment of the higher Soviet echelons. One has only to look at



the post war activity of the indigenous party personnel who subverted the Eastern European countries of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland to be able to posit a model of peacetime activity for the future.

Strategic planning accomplishes many of its subfunctions in the pre-hostilities time frame. This is at least partially caused by the change in Soviet perceptions of the initial phase of the next war. This change does not limit itself to the subfunctions of strategic planning but concerns the other major functional areas as well.

#### DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES: PEACETIME

The deployment of forces function is not an area which can be allowed to wait until war breaks out for its accomplishment. Creation of the strategic organization, creation of fronts, creation of defense-in-depth, the integration of ground, navy, air and air defense forces and the creation of special forces all take place in peacetime. All are prepared in readiness for any future war.

The strategic organization, which waited until the advent of hostilities in World War II for its formation, has not been allowed to go out of existence. (This will be dealt with more thoroughly in Chapter 4). General Kulikov, in reflecting on World War II states:

Consequently one of the lessons of the war consists of the fact that the system of strategic leadership must be thought out, worked out, and coordinated in all details ahead of time before the start of war.<sup>9</sup>

Creation of fronts is not so clearly a peacetime function, yet it is one of those organizational details which, if at all possible, and given enough warning of the direction of a conventional operation, would be prepared and exercised in peacetime.

The creation of defense-in-depth in a strategic framework, and given the Soviet perception of a future nuclear war, can certainly be found in peacetime. The current emphasis on civil defense of the population and industry by a shelter program and the hardening of industry is a classic preparation for war. (This perception is currently being debated but cannot be dismissed completely).

The last two subfunctions of the deployment of forces, that is, integration of forces and creation of special forces both become peacetime efforts when the shortness of the initial operating period of a future war is considered.

Victory in the modern operation or engagement is impossible without well-organized troop coordination, coordination of their combat efforts in regard to objective, place and time. The front and army encompasses the various branches and arms, and the various combat hardware, each of which can perform a particular mission. In an operation they perform not merely as missiles, artillery, infantry, and tanks, but as aggregate systems. In this way they acquire new qualities. Coordination should ensure the unification and agreement of all systems in achieving victory over the enemy with minimum losses in men and equipment.<sup>10</sup>

These functions are too complicated and time consuming to wait until hostilities begin, therefore they will be completed and exercised in peacetime like the other aspects of force deployment. Viewers of the films "I Serve the Soviet Union" (1967) and "Inheritors of Victory" (1975) are presented with the picture of a high degree of integration and planning. All aspects of the exercises depicted in the two films run smoothly (as one might expect) yet the concept of mobility and coordinated force followed by extensive resupply efforts leaves one with the clear impression that peacetime integration has not been neglected.

#### MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION: PEACETIME

The function of material distribution has evolved extensively since World War II. The Chief of the Rear of the Red Army is the official responsible for working out the complicated supply and logistics efforts which are necessary during exercises and war. The planning and staff functions which make up this effort in peacetime are different from those required during wartime and, though they might be thought of as continuous, they change character when hostilities begin. Casualties, for example, must be evacuated and supply lines must be extended. This function requires massive peacetime effort to establish its viability in wartime.

The large expenditure of material assets and the difficulty of replenishing them under conditions of a complex ground and air situation and the danger of the mass destruction of material reserves at stores and bases



has required a new approach toward the organization of rear services for troops in battle and the skillful maneuvering of material assets during combat operations.

#### FORMATION AND UTILIZATION OF RESERVES: PEACETIME

Universal military service and such organizations as the Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Air Force and the Navy (DOSAAF) effectively contributed to the peacetime formation and utilization of reserves in the Soviet Union. Colonel Richard Odom concludes that no male in the Soviet Union can live his life without some involvement<sup>12</sup> with the military, and the involvement is likely to be lengthy. Because of this the formation of reserves encompasses much of the Soviet population in peacetime and the reserve would be readily available in war.

#### EMISSARIES TO THE FIELD: PEACETIME

As far as the final function, that of providing special emissaries to the field, a great deal of effort has gone into ensuring that strategic cooperation exists between the front or Military District, and the Headquarters. The considerable investment in massive, hardened, and redundant communications is designed to ensure bilateral cooperation even in the event of nuclear war. This cooperation and communication must be established prior to hostilities if it is to stand any chance of effective employment once war breaks out.

It appears then that a number of the previously discussed World War II Stavka functions now have a purely peacetime viability. Because of the likely nature of a future war, they could not currently be performed under conditions of hostility, at least in the initial period. Some appear to have the possibility of being viable in both peace and war and warrant a brief discussion.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING: CONTINUOUS

The direction of reconnaissance both strategic and tactical as well as the effort to secure the element of surprise are both functions which survive from peacetime to wartime. Their form may change somewhat in the transition but they are substantially the same.

Coordination of partisan efforts, depends entirely upon interpretation. For the sake of argument it appears likely that it occurs in peace or war and is involved to some extent with military planning. The previous discussions of Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia can be applied here.

Strategic prediction has a role in both peace and war and extensive efforts will be made to fulfill requirements of both periods. The lesson of the initiation of the German invasion is not lost on the Soviets.

The experience gained during the Great Patriotic War in the sphere of military strategy has not lost its significance for the present either. Creatively interpreting it and taking into account the country's changed

sociopolitical conditions and increased economic potentialities as well as the new means of armed struggle, Soviet military strategy is developing and solving the questions which come within its sphere in the light of the tasks set by the 24th CPSU Congress to strengthen the defense capability of our socialist state.<sup>13</sup>

#### EMISSARIES TO THE FIELD: CONTINUOUS

Finally, those functions associated with coordination between headquarters and fronts and continuous monitoring of operations appear to be exercised continuously. Though a chain of command exists from the highest echelon to the lowest, there appears to be no tradition for rigid adherence to it. Indeed, the tradition offers endless avenues for circumventing it, both politically and militarily. The conclusion is therefore, that the headquarters element will consistently be in contact with the executorial level both in peace and in war.

#### CONCLUSION

The conclusion which the foregoing analysis leads to is that the majority of the previously Stavka functions which we have discussed are performed in peacetime. Granted, Stalin utterly mismanaged his armed forces prior to World War II and they were in a deplorable state of readiness when the invasion occurred. Further agreed that the functions which developed during wartime should have been accomplished during peacetime, but for the most part they were not. What this analysis does establish, however, is that the majority of the wartime functions which were discussed are being performed in the current day-to-day peacetime operations of the Soviet Armed Forces.



## CHAPTER 3 NOTES

<sup>1</sup>S.P. Ivanov, ed. and others, The Initial Period of a War: Based on the Experience of the First Campaigns and Operations of World War II (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974), Translation on USSR Military Affairs No. 1215, U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 20 Jan 1976, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>K.S. Borhkarev, I.P. Prussarov, A.A. Balakov, "The Modern Revolution of Military Affairs and its Meaning", The Program of the CPSU on the Defense of the Socialist Fatherland, (Moscow: Moscow Publishing House, 1965), cited in and translated by William R. Kintner, Harriet Fast Scott, The Nuclear Revolution in Soviet Affairs, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 130.

<sup>3</sup>V.D. Sokolovskii, Soviet Military Strategy, translated, analyzed and annotated by H. Dinerstein, L. Goure and T. Wolfe (Santa Monica, California: USAF Project Rand, 1963), p. 314. [1st edition]

<sup>4</sup>K.F. Shorobogatkin, Head Author, 50 Years of the Armed Forces of the USSR, translated by Harriet Fast Scott, Soviet Military Doctrine - Its Continuity - 1960-1970, (Menlo Park, California: Stanford Research Institute, 1971), (Technical Note - Working Paper), pp. 41-42.

<sup>5</sup>V.D. Sokolovskii, op. cit., p. 516.

<sup>6</sup>A.A. Stokov, ed., "Military Art in the Postwar Period", The History of Military Art, (Moscow, 1965) translated and edited by William R. Kintner and Harriet Fast Scott, The Nuclear Revolution in Soviet Affairs (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 224.

<sup>7</sup>P. Rotmistrov, "On the Role of Surprise in Contemporary War", translated by H.S. Dinerstein, War and the Soviet Union: Nuclear Weapons and the Revolution in Soviet Military and Political Thinking, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 188.

<sup>8</sup>S.P. Ivanov, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>9</sup>V. Kulikov, "Strategic Leadership of the Armed Forces", as translated in Translation on USSR Military Affairs No. 1160, U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 8 July 1975, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup>G.G. Lukava, "Leninist Methodology of Solving Problems of Military Science,; The Philosophical Heritage of V.I. Lenin in and Problems of Contemporary War (Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1972), translated by U.S. Department of the Air Force (Washington: GPO, 1974), p. 109.

<sup>11</sup>V. Reznichenko, "The Role and Place of Tactics in Modern Warfare" Red Star, 9 Dec 1975, translated by Soviet Press Selected Translations, February 1976, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup>William E. Odom, "The Militarization of Soviet Society", Problems of Communism, September - October 1976, pp. 34-51.

<sup>13</sup>V. Kulikov, "The Soviet Armed Forces and Military Science", Kommunist, February 1973, as translated by Soviet Press Selected Translations, May 1973, p. 6.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

### INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the Stavka functions and their remnants, that is to say, the wartime Stavka functions which are being done today, clearly indicates that functionally, at least, the Stavka process is still operational and has been so since the end of World War II. This chapter will trace the lessons learned from the pre-World War II and initial period of World War II which affect this organizational discussion and trace the history of the Stavka from World War I to the present. It will also assess the relative likelihood of several organizations as the inheritors of the functional performance in light of Sokolovsky's views on the subject, discuss several supportive ideas, and finally summarize these findings in light of the Chapter 1 propositions.

The analysis in Chapter 3 indicates that the functions associated with peacetime are actively being accomplished. The advanced state of strength and readiness currently displayed by the Soviet forces is proof of functional accomplishment. Since these functions traditionally belonged to the Stavka, why would their accomplishment be entrusted to other organizational entities? Possibly Stalin's fear of the military caused him to break up the Stavka's functions after



the war and divide them amongst a number of agencies. Yet no real evidence indicates that this was done nor has the military become less powerful in the three decades since the war. The question remains, however, as to what institutional body presently functions in this capacity and why. It has already been suggested herein that such a body exists, an attempt will now be made to suggest, outside of the functional analysis, why this body exists. To do so we must first discuss the period just after the Russo-Finnish War of 1939.

#### LESSONS: 1939-1945

##### 1939

The Soviets had ultimately won the Russo-Finnish War, but not before revealing their own incredible weaknesses and ineptitudes. The lesson which was avoided and not apparently learned was that the terror had removed large chunks of capable leadership from the middle echelons. Stalin could not very well attribute this failure to himself. A second lesson was perceived but received only limited attention, presumably for a similar reason. Admiral Kuznetsov pointed it out in his discussion of the post-mortem in April 1940 (quoted in Chapter 2, p. 8): no one knew who or how the highest authorities would direct the troops.

##### 1941-1945

This confusion was not resolved prior to the German invasion in 1941, so that when the invasion did come it

brought complete tactical surprise and capitalized on the disruption of the Soviet command and control.

All the errors committed in strategic planning, armaments production, and tactical training of troops before the war; all the devastation wrought in the Soviet professional officer corps by the Purge were multiplied by the inexcusable operational and tactical surprise achieved by German armies along the entire line and were compounded by the ineptitude of the Soviet High Command in its direction of the Red Army during the first months of the war. The result was an unprecedented military disaster which imprinted a traumatic experience in the memory of every participant and witness. The traumatic character of this experience is clearly discernible in the memoirs of Soviet generals. The reevaluation of the Nazi-Soviet war after Stalin's death and again after Khrushchev's ouster started with just this disaster in June 1941 and the months which followed. For Soviet generals, it retains a compelling fascination.<sup>1</sup>

This clearly stated quotation provides emphasis to the contention that the Soviet leadership gained a clear perception of the necessity for maintaining the wartime leadership structure in peacetime. Admiral Kuznetsov again elaborates: "The war caught us without a properly prepared organization of the highest military leadership. Only with the start of war was it hastily organized. Undoubtedly this should have been done long before, in peacetime."<sup>2</sup> This statement leads one to conclude that this lesson was not lost on the present-day leadership. General Kulikov supports this assertion in this way:

Consequently one of the lessons of the war consists of the fact that the system of strategic leadership must be thought out, worked out, and coordinated in all details ahead of time, before the start of a war.<sup>3</sup>

## STAVKA: WORLD WAR I - PRESENT

Pursuant to the question of why there is still a body which functions as the Stavka, an examination of the history of the Stavka or Stavka-like bodies from World War I to the present is in order.

World War I - 1941

On 2 September 1918 the government set up the Revolutionary Military Council under Trotsky to direct the war effort (against the Whites). This development succeeded the wartime formation of the Stavka (1914) which functioned as the highest military body of the armed forces and is thought by many to be the predecessor of the Revolutionary Military Council. The Revolutionary Military Council lasted until 1934 when:

On June 24, 1934, the old Commissariat of the Army and Navy was renamed the People's Commissariat of Defense. The 'collective leadership' of the Revolutionary Military Council, a relic of the civil war days which organized the overall defense of the Soviet Union was abolished, and its rights were vested in the Defense Commissar and his eleven Deputy Commissars. The latter included the senior commanders in charge of the General Staff, the air force, the navy, the General Inspectorate, the army's Central Administration and the Chief Political Directorate.<sup>4</sup>

The Revolutionary Military Council thereby became the Military Council and was attached to the People's Commissariat of Defense.<sup>5</sup> In 1938, it became the Main Military Council of the Red Army.<sup>6</sup> It appears that the primacy of this organization had been submerged substantially by 1939. A variety of



reasons suggest themselves, not the least of which is the effort by Stalin to prevent any kind of coalition of strength from forming within the Armed Services. There was also the Main Military Council of the Navy attached to the People's Commissariat of Defense, an analogous body and perhaps of equal power.<sup>7</sup>

#### 1941-1960

The outbreak of hostilities brought home the lessons mentioned previously as well as providing the impetus for the centralization under Stalin which was described in Chapter 2. The end of the war brought the abolition of both the GKO and the Stavka. What happened to their functions, or at least those of the Stavka, is a matter of varying interpretation at this point; however, an attempt will now be made to point out what is thought to be the most likely course of events. This analysis will include dissenting viewpoints when they are important.

Since the dissolution of the two supreme organizations created during the war - the State Defence Committee and the Stavka (GHQ) - the organization of national defence was in a situation analagous to that in 1941: the coordination of the ministries of Defence, Navy and the other ministries involved in national defence (in fact the majority of ministries) depended on the Council of Ministers or more precisely on the presidium of the Council. Stalin was both secretary-general of the party and chairman of the Council and thus the prerogatives of the defence committee were simply transferred to the Presidium of the Council.<sup>8</sup>

Others, however, feel that the functions of the Stavka were transferred to the Higher Military Council

attached to the Ministry of the Armed Forces which was formed in February 1946. This council apparently survived reorganizations in 1950 and 1953 when the Military and Naval Ministries were merged to become the Ministry of Defense.

#### 1960-Present

Opinions begin to diverge at this point. One school of thought indicates that the Higher Military Council grew into the Defense Council. The opposing view is that it evolved into the Stavka. Both use as a point of departure the Penkovskiy papers.

There is also a Supreme Military Council directly under the Presidium of the Central Committee CPSU, chaired by Khrushchev and in his absence by Kozlov or Mikoyan. There are always a few members of the Presidium of the Central Committee CPSU in attendance at the meetings of the Supreme Military Council. The Ministers of Defense and the commanders in chief of the service arms are automatically members of the council....<sup>10</sup>

Later on Penkovskiy describes the subject matter for this group as armaments production, weapons systems and the interface between the Ministry of Defense and the other ministries.<sup>11</sup> The membership of this group resembles that of the Stavka, but the subject matter is more analogous to that of the State Defense Committee. This fact is suspected to be the prime contributor to the differences of opinion on what happened to the functions formerly ascribed to the Stavka.

One side of the argument looks at the following statement by Sokolovsky and concludes that the Stavka existed

in 1963. "The direct leadership of the Armed Forces during a war will obviously be accomplished, as before, by the Stavka of the Supreme High Command."<sup>12</sup> Others view it as a prediction of a reformation which will occur again only in wartime. The concrete evidence for either position is sketchy in the late sixties. However, in 1971, the following statement appeared.

In accordance with this, each type of armed force is intended for the conduct of military actions predominantly in some specific sphere - on land, on sea, or in the air, and it accomplishes the execution of missions under the direction of the commander-in-chief of this type of Armed Force or of the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief directly.<sup>13</sup> [General Headquarters is synonymous to the Stavka.]

This statement indicates to some authors, C.G. Jacobsen for example, that the Stavka currently exists as an organ of military-political control. Other writers focus upon the Supreme Soviet decree of May 7, 1976 and other articles which note Brezhnev's name as chairman of the USSR Council of Defense. They contend that these are an indicator that the Council of Defense is the supreme military-political authority.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY: WHO SHARES IT?

The highest body dealing specifically with military and defense matters is the Supreme (or Higher) Defense Council (VSO). Chaired by party General Secretary Brezhnev, this body includes Prime Minister Aleksei N. Kosygin, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium Nikolai V. Podgorny, Party Secretary Dmitri F. Ustinov, and Minister of Defense Andrei A. Grechko.<sup>14</sup>



It is quite likely that both bodies exist. This research concludes that their functions are closer to their counterparts in World War II than most writers seem to indicate. The functional analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 points to the fact that the Stavka must exist today. The revolution in military affairs now points to the necessity to carry out a multitude of readiness functions in peacetime. General Ivanov in his book The Initial Period of a War argues that in any future war all preparations and action which normally take place in the initial period should be moved to the pre-war period.

The experience of the initial period clearly showed a persistent trend to remove preparatory measures including mobilization and strategic deployment of the armed forces, for conducting the first operations outside of the war itself that is, to the prewar period.<sup>15</sup>

It hardly seems likely that the formation of the two organizations which constitute the highest military and political economic authority would be waiting for the first bomb to fall. This brings us to the final argument that the Stavka is in being and functioning: there is a complete lack of time for collegial decision-making or formation of the necessary organization under the spur of a nuclear attack. John Erickson, in 1973, suggested that the General Staff

... has also assumed certain 'command attributes' in the past five years, in the sense of furnishing direction and control for a situation - such as nuclear war - in which there would be no time to establish the Stavka-type centralized body for which Marshal Sokolovskii had earlier argued.<sup>16</sup>

Little evidence has been found to support this contention and much to refute it. The consideration is sound, however; who or what body does act in the face of a nuclear war? The best prepared answer and the one that the Soviets have in the past striven to attain, apparently is the establishment and maintenance of the mechanism of response, i.e. the Stavka and the Defense Committee.

#### SUMMARY

This effort has attempted to provide a reasoned and analytic approach to the shadowy question of military leadership in the Soviet Union. The conclusion after performing the analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 is that the Stavka is not being reconstituted, but has been functioning for a substantial period of time. Consequently, its existence or signs of its existence are not in themselves, indications of increased preparation/readiness/desire for war.

Certain of the propositions in the first chapter, e.g. the promotion of Brezhnev, Ustinov, Andropov and Shelekov may plausibly be explained by the desire to clearly define the Party's control of the military and to facilitate their assumption of "greater wartime influence without significant organizational realignment or bureaucratic chaos."<sup>17</sup> It is difficult to say why these promotions are taking place now, but it may be that Marshal of the Soviet Union and General Secretary of the Central Committee Brezhnev has

finally arrived at the pinnacle of power and feels comfortable in asserting his role as Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all Soviet military forces. Nonetheless, the promotions in themselves do not constitute reestablishment of the Stavka.

Finally, the initial period the war and the preparation for it which General Ivanov emphasized does not necessarily imply that the Stavka is to be physically reconstituted. The implications of this analysis should not be misread to mean that these actions by the Soviet Union are in any way innocent or that they are inconsistent with the warlike posture of the Soviet Union. Their only conclusion is that the Stavka or, at least its functional process, has consistently existed and been performed for some time; therefore, no incandescent significance can readily be attached to the discovery of that fact.



## CHAPTER 4 NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Seweryn Bialer, ed., Stalin and His Generals: Soviet Military Memoirs of World War II (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>N.G. Kuznetsov, "Voenno-morskoi flot nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny," (Command in Transition), Voennoistoricheskii Zhurnal, No. 9, 1966, cited by Bialer, op. cit., p. 348.

<sup>3</sup>V. Kulikov, "Strategic Leadership of the Armed Forces," Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal, No. 6, June 1975, as translated by Translations on USSR Military Affairs No 1160, U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 8 July 1975, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Malcolm Mackintosh, Juggernaut: A History of the Soviet Armed Forces (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 75.

<sup>5</sup>C.G. Jacobsen, Soviet Strategy - Soviet Foreign Policy: Military Considerations Affecting Soviet Policy-Making (Glasgow: The University Press, 1972), p. 178.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Otto Preston Chaney, Jr., Zhukov (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 440.

<sup>8</sup>Michael Garder, A History of the Soviet Army (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1966), p. 131.

<sup>9</sup>Michael J. Dean, "Special Administrative Organizations and the Role of the Military in Post Attack Recovery" (Paper in author's possession) (Mimeographed.) p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>Oleg Penkovskiy, The Penkovskiy Papers (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), p. 233.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>12</sup>V.D. Sokolovsky, ed., Military Strategy, Harriet Fast Scott, trans. (Third edition, Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio: U.S. Air Force Systems Command, Foreign Technology Division, 1968), p. 376.

<sup>13</sup>S.N. Kozlov, Spravochnik Ofitsera (Officer's Handbook) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1971) translated (Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio: U.S. Air Force Systems Command, Foreign Technology Division, 1971), p. 190.

<sup>14</sup>Raymond L. Garthoff, "Salt and the Soviet Military," Problems of Communism, January-February, 1975, p. 29.

<sup>15</sup>S.P. Ivanov, ed., The Initial Period of A War: Based on the Experience of the First Campaigns and Operations of World War II, translated by Translations on USSR Military Affairs No. 1215, U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, 20 June 1976, p. 79.

<sup>16</sup>John Erickson, "Soviet Military Power: USSI Report 73-1", Strategic Review (1973), 21.

<sup>17</sup>Dean, op. cit., p. 14.

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